

Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on “Examining Medical Product Development in the Wake of the Ebola
Epidemic”
November 19, 2014

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today the committee is holding its third hearing on the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. This is a global threat, and we need to work together – Congress, government agencies, and product developers – to successfully combat this epidemic. Today we focus on medical product development, including treatments, vaccines, and diagnostics, related to Ebola. We’d like to get a better understanding of where we are in the development of these products and what more we need to do to help treat those who are sick, prevent further spread, and prevent another outbreak in the future.

We will hear from experts from the Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority about how these agencies are working with product sponsors on the design and operation of clinical trials, manufacturing, and distribution.

We will also examine how various government agencies are working together to ensure that products are developed and deployed as quickly and safely as possible. Finally, we’d like to hear more from the agencies on how they plan to utilize existing products and help with the development of new products both here and abroad.

In 2013, Congress enacted the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act in an effort to ensure that we are prepared to respond to an epidemic - just like the very situation we are confronted with today. The law authorizes funding for the purchase of medical countermeasures and increased support for advanced research and development of potential medical countermeasures, and it requires more coordination and prioritization among the agencies represented today in product development.

As we continue to evaluate our response to the ongoing Ebola outbreak, it is important that we understand how that law has helped in responding to this epidemic and if there are areas Congress may need to reevaluate. Our work will continue to ensure we are doing whatever it takes to keep Americans safe.

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